

IN HONOR OF DR. TOMÁS A.  
ARCINIEGA

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 17, 2003*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, it is with utmost pleasure and privilege that I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to Dr. Tomás Arciniega, President of California State University Bakersfield. Dr. Arciniega has been a champion of higher education, a trailblazer who has opened doors for countless underrepresented students, and a good friend. After 30 years with the California State University system, this exceptional teacher and administrator will complete his service at CSU Bakersfield, retiring soon after the commencement of the Class of 2004. Recognizing that his career has been both distinguished and memorable, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities will honor him tonight in its first ever Roast and Fundraiser, which will support a scholarship in Dr. Arciniega's name.

Growing up in the projects of El Paso, Texas, Tomás learned his strong work ethic and core values from his parents, Tomás and Judith Arciniega. In tenth grade, he met his future wife, Concha, and together they became an indivisible team, blessed with a true partnership, friendship and love. Tomás and Concha are now the proud parents of four daughters (Wendy, Lisa, Judy and Laura) and seven grandchildren (Nico, Melina, Vanessa, Natalie, Jakob, Lukas and Benjamin). Family has always been the top priority for Tomás and Concha, who relish their regular road-trips to San Diego, Albuquerque and Phoenix to ensure their active and valuable role in the lives of their grandchildren.

The first in his family to attend college, Tomás's successes in his early years demonstrate his commitment to learning, competing, and serving. He earned his bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University in teacher education. He holds a master's and doctorate in educational administration—both completed at the University of New Mexico. And his pursuit of education has taken him east to Harvard where he attended the Institute for Educational Management program for senior university executives.

A well-rounded scholar athlete, Tomás played football and baseball throughout high school and received a football scholarship to New Mexico State University. He even played catcher in baseball's minor leagues on a farm team for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Tomás proudly served his country, first as an officer in the United States Army, and later as a foreign officer for the U.S. Department of State, where he was responsible for the coordination and contracting of technical support services in health and education in the Dominican Republic. Tomás continued his work overseas in Colombia, on behalf of UNM, as a principal advisor in school administration and higher education to the Colombian Ministry of Education.

Tomás's educational career has always combined his passion for students with his commitment to making a difference as an administrator. His career has taken him from the Las Cruces Independent School District's hall of administration, to teaching at the intermediate and high school levels in Albu-

querque, New Mexico, and then on to the University of Texas, El Paso where he served as an associate professor of educational administration and assistant dean. From there, he was named the dean of the School of Education and professor of educational administration at San Diego State University.

The California State University system recognized Tomás's achievements by appointing him vice president for academic affairs and professor of educational administration at California State University, Fresno. In that capacity, Tomás accomplished significant changes including the reorganization of the academic budget management system, increasing the level of outside grant activities, revising the system for tenure and promotion of faculty, reorganizing the School of Social Work and Health Services, and initiating and implementing major affirmative action initiatives in academic affairs.

For the last 20 years, Tomás has served as the president and a professor of education at California State University, Bakersfield. During his tenure, CSUB has grown dramatically as demonstrated by the institution achieving university status and record enrollment gains. CSUB has enjoyed increased funding for research and training, as well as major capital outlay projects, including an athletics activities center, a new library, a Child Care Center, an outdoor amphitheatre, a student union, and the Business Development Center. Tomás has been central to the fundamental redefinition of CSUB's institutional mission to achieve a closer nexus between CSUB and its regional community, resulting in the community's generous support for and coordination with the university. Furthermore, Tomás has demonstrated true leadership in promoting educational equity and access to a quality higher education for the region's diverse population, thus, helping to dramatically increase the enrollments of minority and women students and the hiring of ethnic minorities and women at the faculty, staff and administration levels.

Mr. Speaker, as family, friends, and colleagues gather to roast and pay tribute to Tomás's many accomplishments, it is with great admiration and pride that I ask my colleagues to join me today in saluting this truly remarkable example of the American dream. Tomás is a fortunate man who can retire with the knowledge that he made a difference fighting his entire life to improve education for all students, but even more importantly, he did so while also maintaining a sincere commitment to loving and supporting his family. Tomás sent his own children off to school every morning with the simple, yet profound, message to "just remember you're the greatest!" And he worked hard every day to provide those same opportunities for all children to believe in themselves, dream big and obtain a first-rate education. As Tomás closes this chapter of his distinguished career, I would like to say "thank you" on behalf of the students, teachers and families whose lives he has changed by opening doors, leading by example and always holding firm to his convictions. His countless contributions will be felt for generations to come.

ANNUAL SIKH CONVENTION LAYS  
PLANS FOR EXPANDING STRUG-  
GLE FOR FREEDOM

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 17, 2003*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the International Sikh Organization held its annual convention on the weekend of October 10–11–12, 2003 in Houston. The convention laid plans for the expansion of the movement to free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987.

The convention was attended by many delegates from all around the United States and Canada. They made plans to expand their office in Washington, which has been an invaluable resource to us here in Congress in getting out information about the oppression of the Sikhs and other minorities by the Indian government. This is good to see. The glow of freedom still burns brightly in the hearts of these Sikh leaders.

The delegates also congratulated Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the International Sikh Organization and the Council of Khalistan, for his tireless work in support of the interests of Sikhs in this country and the cause of freedom for Khalistan. I can say from my personal experience that Dr. Aulakh has worked for that cause with great dedication for several years and he has provided a lot of information to those of us in Congress who are interested in the cause of human rights and freedom in South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to take this opportunity to salute the International Sikh Organization on a very successful convention and wish it continued success in the future. We can support its efforts to bring freedom to the Sikh people, and other regions in South Asia by insisting that human rights are observed and by declaring our support for a free and fair plebiscite under international monitoring on the question of independence.

HONORING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS  
FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
CIVIC EDUCATION

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 17, 2003*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor local organizations throughout our great nation for their contributions to civic education. Estimates are that State governments have slashed over \$11–15 billion from their education budgets this year. At the same time, public opinion surveys indicate that education is at the top of the list of issues of interest to American citizens.

It is at times like this that we are particularly grateful that private sector individuals and organizations contribute to the education of America's youth. One such group is the Committee for Citizen Awareness, a not-for-profit organization that produces award-winning educational videotapes addressing civic subjects. In cooperation with organizations across America, they give these civic videotapes for free to high schools, community colleges,